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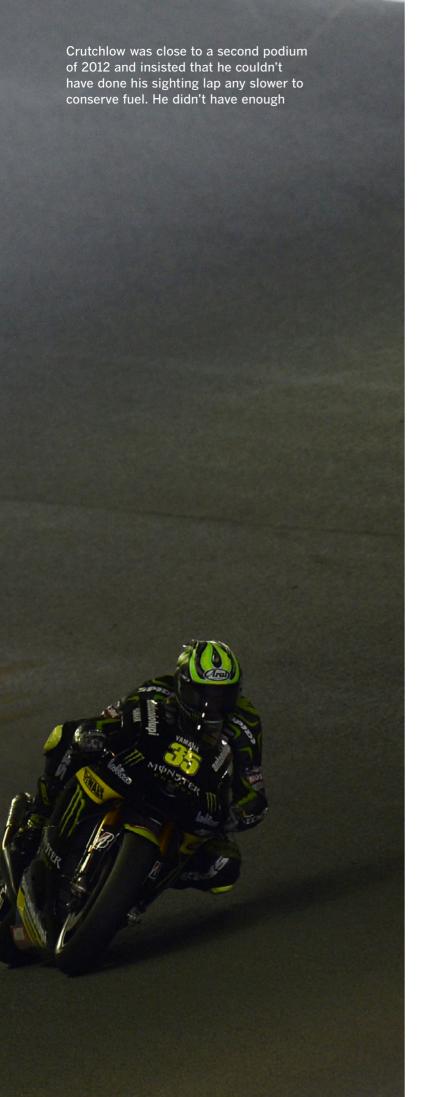












Just like the Aragon race two weeks ago, the Japanese GP was a head-to-head battle between Spanish title rivals Jorge Lorenzo and Dani Pedrosa. And just like that race the decisive pass was made before the race reached its halfway point, with Pedrosa cruising on to a fourth victory in five events, taking his tally for the season to a personal best of five.

28 points now separate them in the championship, and it seems increasingly likely that the title fight will go down to the final round in Valencia, although Lorenzo already now knows that three podium finishes will suffice.

On to the most interesting part of the Motegi race and it was the compelling duel between Alvaro Bautista and Cal Crutchlow that stole the limelight in MotoGP. The tyre marks left on each other's leathers underlined their desperation to take the final podium slot and if it weren't for their tussle they may even have closed the gap to Lorenzo, such was their individual race pace throughout.

As it was, Crutchlow's challenge came to a cruel and abrupt end as he pulled up on the final lap - a can of Monster-worth of fuel short of being able to make one last hurrah before the flag.

All credit to Bautista though, who blotted the fresh signature on his Gresini Honda contract with a gutsy performance. With the talk the whole weekend about how much stress the hard-braking Motegi track was putting on the front end of the 1000cc machines, his muchmaligned Showa suspension and Nissin brakes certainly did the trick. Hopefully the work done will lead to him challenging regularly for the podium from now on.

The lower classes once again provided the most exciting action of the day, with Marc Marquez recovering from hitting neutral on the grid to take a remarkable victory ahead of Pol Espargaro. It was a decent day for the Pons team nonetheless, with Tito Rabat taking his first podium of the season in third alongside his team-mate.

Moto3 was a belly-full of an appetizer beforehand, with the last lap seeing enough talking points alone to merit a lengthy discussion.

Firstly, championship challenger Luis Salom made a banzai move into the first corner and collected race leader Jonas Folger, who then squared up to the apologetic Spaniard. No fisticuffs ensued, but Salom did get a rap on the knuckles from Race Direction, who slapped him with a five-place grid penalty for Malaysia.

At that point Sandro Cortese led the way, and with Maverick Viñales labouring to tag along in fourth place, the German was set to be crowned as world champion, but the drama had still not ended.

Cortese's younger team-mate Danny Kent, who had been in the top group all along after starting from pole, made a move to overtake his colleague at the bottom of the back straight, and was joined by Italian Alessandro Tonucci. The latter had only ever enjoyed a best finish of tenth before now, and had not been overawed by the occasion.

Both made it through on Cortese, who had left the door into the corner wide open, but ran out wide on exit. As they tried to pull it round Cortese attempted to take the inside line but collided into the side of Tonucci and went down in the tunnel, taking a whack on the back of the head in the process. Amazingly he was able to grab the clutch and pick his bike up, eventually limping home in sixth place, his joint-worst result of the season.

Meanwhile Kent went on to win his first ever grand prix, the first by a Brit since 2010, closely followed by Viñales and then Tonucci who had somehow managed to stay onboard despite the smash with Cortese. At first the Ajo team and Cortese appeared angry at Kent, although the Brit played no part in the collision, however later tweets from the German admitted he had misdirected his rage and he rightly congratulated his friend. There had been no team orders (thankfully) and Kent had 'not done anything silly', just as instructed by his team boss.

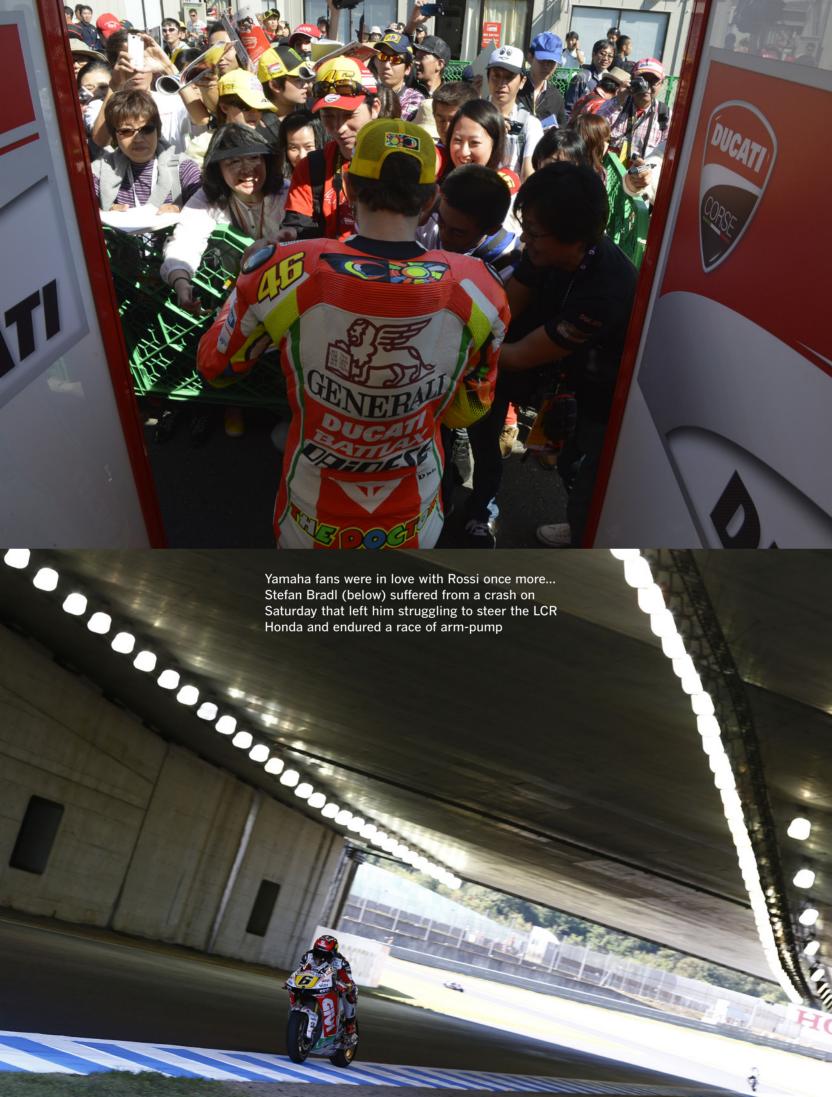














a second lap crash that he claimed was due to a brake problem. Motegi's slower corners were hard on the front ends of the bikes





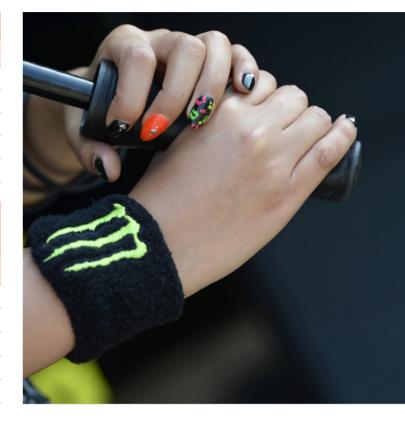


CLASSIFICATION & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

MotoGP RESULT				
Riders				
1	Dani Pedrosa, SPA	Honda		
2	Jorge Lorenzo, SPA	Yamaha		
3	Alvaro Bautista, SPA	Honda		
4	Andrea Dovizioso, ITA	Yamaha		
5	Casey Stoner, AUS	Honda		

MotoGP CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 15 OF 18 ROUNDS)

Riders		Points
1	Jorge Lorenzo	310
2	Dani Pedrosa	282
3	Casey Stoner	197
4	Andrea Dovizioso	192
5	Alvaro Bautista	144



Moto2 RESULT Riders 1 Marc Marquez, SPA Suter 2 Pol Espagaro, SPA Kalex 3 Esteve Rabat, SPA Kalex 4 Scott Redding, GBR Kalex 5 Thomas Luthi, SUI Suter

Moto2 CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 14 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders		Points
1	Marc Marquez	283
2	Pol Espagaro	230
3	Andrea lannone	178
4	Thomas Luthi	177
5	Scott Redding	144

Moto3 RESULT				
Riders				
1	Danny Kent, GBR	KTM		
2	Maverick Viñales, SPA	FTR Honda		
3	Alessandro Tonucci, ITA	FTR Honda		
4	Alex Rins, SPA	Suter Honda		
5	Zulfahmi Khairuddin, MAL	KTM		

Moto3 CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 14 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders		Points
1	Sandro Cortese	255
2	Maverick Viñales	199
3	Luis Salom	194
4	Romano Fenati	126
5	Alex Rins	119





BATI ONBOARD WITH HONDA

A Ivaro Bautista's renewed contract with San Carlo Honda Gresini was the final piece in the prototype puzzle for next season in MotoGP. His seat was one of the most coveted rides for 2013 and several of his rivals have tried to crowbar him out of it, but with podiums at the team's home race in Misano and Honda's Motegi venue mean he will pilot the RC213V again next year.

The confirmation also means all 12 of the full prototypes are now taken for next year, with the only rookies being Marc Marquez and Andrea lannone stepping up from Moto2. Now the focus will switch to the available CRT machines for 2013, with it rumoured there may be as many as twelve out on the grid making a solid total of 24 bikes for the premier class.

MOTEGI SIGNED UP FOR ANOTHER FIVE YEARS

Suzuka may have the history, and is undoubtedly a much more exciting racetrack and fan venue, but it has been deemed unsafe for MotoGP since Daijiro Kato's tragic accident there in 2003. As such, Motegi was confirmed once more as a MotoGP venue for at least the next five years in a presentation at the facility about two hours directly north of Tokyo.

Hiroshi Soda, the President of Mobilityland - the arm of Honda which manages both tracks - admitted that the cost of gaining FIM homologation for Suzuka would run into hundreds of millions of Yen (millions of dollars) as it would entail buying up nearby land which is not currently for sale. So the Twin Ring it is.







By Gavin Emmett

et me start this blog by declaring openly that am a big fan of Marc Marquez.

If anyone had any doubts about his credentials to fill the ample boots of Casey Stoner at Repsol Honda next year, then his display in the Moto2 race in Japan should have put them to bed. He will be a worthy champion.

After what could have been a calamitous error at the start of the race, when his gearbox clicked into neutral and he was left stranded on the line, he showed wherewithal, tenacity and a boatload of skill to scythe his way through the whole field to claim a stunning victory.

He is soon to become the golden boy of the sport, and it's fair to assume he will be truly competitive when he steps up to the premier class next season and takes on his compatriots Jorge Lorenzo and Dani Pedrosa.

In the past he was often compared to Pedrosa, having become something of a Spanish sponsor favourite as a teenager and possessing the kind of demeanour that your mother would be proud of. However the two are clearly very different animals.

Marquez loves a scrap, loves to twist the throttle and is certainly not backwards in coming forwards. This, however, leads to the one lingering concern over his future; that he still hasn't mastered the art of knowing when to rein himself in.

I'm referring of course to the free practice incident with Mika Kallio at Motegi. Although I could just as easily be talking about his collision with Espargaro at Catalunya, his ebullience on

the cool down lap of warm-up in Australia last year which left Ratthapark Wilairot in the medical centre, or his punting-off of Scott Redding at Estoril last year. To name just those in my sievelike memory.

These were all incidents that raised eyebrows, and all of them led to complaints to Race Direction (or the FIM court of arbitration). However despite the penalty at Australia last year (which just gave him another opportunity to show his immense talent as he stormed through from the very back of the grid to third) nothing came of the others. Surely if that day in Phillip Island was seen as his 'yellow card' wrist slap, like the token penalty given to Luis Salom on Sunday, then he is surely getting close to a red at some point.

We saw last year with the top riders' criticisms of Marco Simoncelli where that kind of action can lead to amongst his peers, and he would quickly become a marked man with people who carry a lot more weight than Kallio.

He stayed on an extra year in Moto2 this season to 'keep learning', despite advances from several MotoGP teams, and I'm of the opinion that the 19 year-old has still not grasped that final critical concept.

Forget the childish taunts that he is arrogant or aloof; he is a genuinely agreeable lad and as polite and approachable as any rider out there, it's just that on the track his is a case of the Jekyll and Hyde, and there are times when he needs to hold back that inner demon, or someone needs to do it for him. For his own safety, and that of the riders around him.





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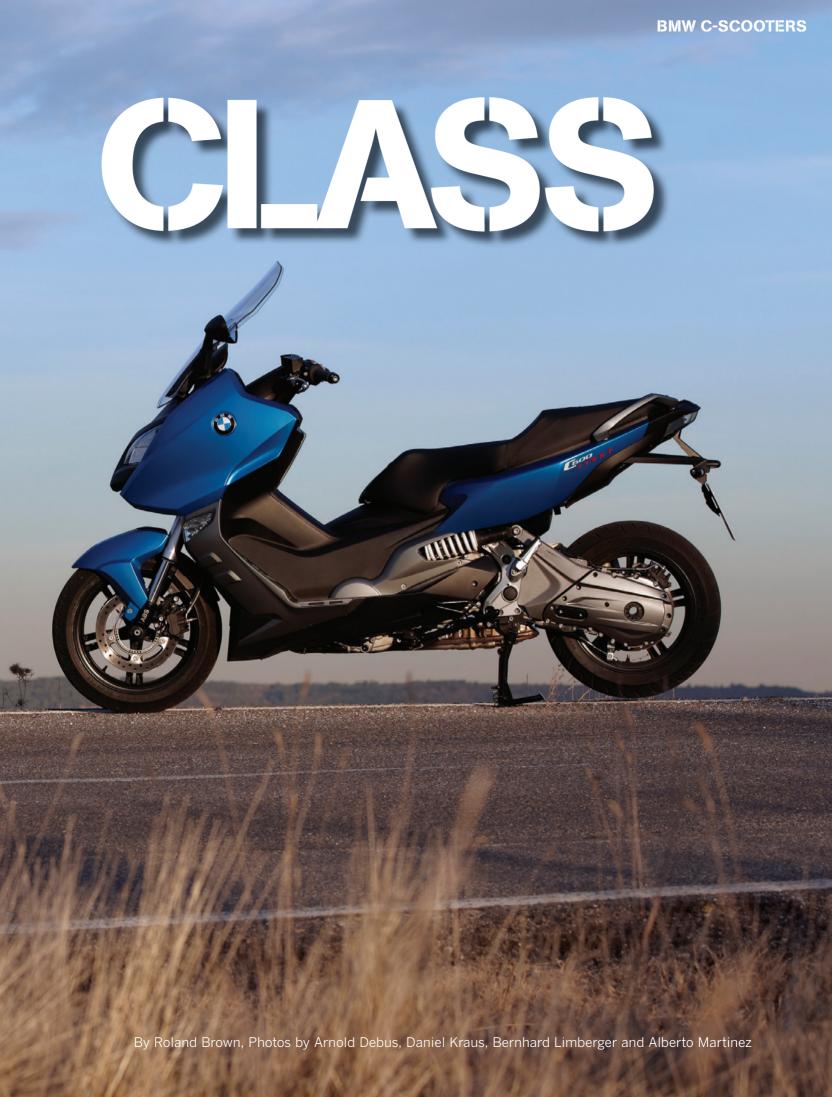




RESEARCH FOUNDATION. WWW.WINGSFORLIFE.COM









BMW's two wheel division is on fire these days, producing a string of fine bikes with seemingly no limit to their ambition. The German firm has just unveiled a new version of the all-conquering R1200GS adventure bike, plus an even more high-tech version of the outrageously fast S1000RR sportster. BMW's range includes everything from simple singles to the luxurious K1600 GTL six. And now they've just begun production (a few months late, due to supplier problems) of a scooter.

My first ride on the C650 GT took the 'on fire' line too literally, as I discovered when I stopped at the first set of lights. A motorist yelled something about 'fuego' out of his window, and I glanced down to see flames licking around my foot. Fortunately the GT's problem turned out to be a cleaning rag that a mechanic had left inside the fairing, next to the exhaust, and the flames were quickly put out with no real damage done.

That turned out to be the most exciting moment of the launch, but I had plenty of fun on the C-scooter. In fact there are two models, although the C600 Sport and C650 GT are more closely related than their names suggest. BMW doesn't always stick to the quaint notion that a bike's name reflects its engine capacity. The C600 and 650 are powered by an identical 647cc, liquid-cooled parallel twin engine. It produces a healthy 60bhp and has a traditional "twist and go" CVT transmission system.

The two models share most chassis parts, including the tubular steel frame, telescopic forks and a single rear suspension unit on the left. They differ mainly in weather protection and comfort levels. While the leaner C600 Sport has a reasonably large fairing and a windscreen that can be manually adjusted through three positions, the C650GT gets a more protective fairing, a larger and electronically adjustable screen, and a thicker dual-seat that incorporates a rider backrest.





BMW returned over 60mpg in normal use, giving a range of 120-plus miles.

Handling was good, albeit not as precise as that of most motorbikes, due mainly to the scooter's length and rearwards weight bias. Steering was nicely neutral, and the chassis did a good job of keeping everything under control. The only disappointment was braking, which had a slightly wooden feel but did at least include ABS as standard.





"The C-scoots are impressively quick, practical and comfortable. Unfortunately they're also eye-wateringly expensive..."



Similar slow-stopping comments apply to the C650 GT which, after my initial combustion trouble, was notable for comfort and efficiency rather than drama and excitement. Its seat is lower despite being thicker, so shorter legged riders should find the GT easier to control at slow speed. It handled well, too, despite being slightly heavier. Its bigger mirrors gave a clearer view, and its pillion is treated to footboards instead of footpegs.

Unfortunately the electronically adjustable screen's range of adjustment is just 10cm, which seems far too little to justify the expense

and weight penalty. Riders of normal height will probably find the screen fine but for tootall me it was simply annoying, as it aimed a blast of turbulent air at my helmet when in its higher positions.

Having developed such a clever storage system as the FlexCase, I was surprised that BMW have chosen not to employ it on both scooters. The GT has slightly more permanent space under the seat, but I couldn't get a second full-face helmet to fit. The C650 is more likely to be fitted with accessories, of which there are many, including a luggage rack and top-box.







So the C-scoots are impressively quick, practical and comfortable. Unfortunately they're also eye-wateringly expensive, with basic prices of £9495 for the Sport and £9795 for the GT. The launch bikes were the upmarket Highline versions, with accessories including heated grips and seat, which cost even more (£10,345 and £10,545 respectively). If you want 100mph performance or the most sophisticated scooters on the market, look no further. But I couldn't help thinking that Piaggio's excellent new 350cc X10 provides almost as much of everything for half the price.



TURNING TOWN

MAKING MX2 QUIETER

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer

OTOR speaks to three technicians on the busy winter period of development and work ahead for teams and brands that have to nudge their 250F engines down by two decibels as per the 2013 FIM regulation for MX2 Grand Prix racing.



DIRK GRUEBEL

CHIEF TECHNICIAN, RED BULL KTM

Gruebel has overseen championship success for KTM and the firm has been unbeaten since 2007 in the MX2 class. In 2012 Jeffrey Herlings won nine races (from sixteen) and eighteen motos (from thirty-two) and followed Tyla Rattray, Marvin Musquin and Ken Roczen into the record books.

What will be the main repercussion with the new decibel limit?

DG: I think everyone will definitely lose some power. Less noise means less power. We cannot be as aggressive with compression ratios or valve timings. In the winter for sure we will have some work. Every second year we face the same challenge of having to come down with the noise limit and riders complain because they want more power and don't want the slowest horse out there. It wont be such a big struggle but the bike will feel different and we have to get it so the riders are happy.

So it is a hefty challenge then...

DG: It is a challenge to reach the same performance as now and we are not going to make any progress with the lower limit. Every year you try to get a little bit more top-end speed and some small gain to make an improvement for the next season and to help out the rider in some areas. The goal for 2013 will simply be to be on the same level as this year but with that lower noise level.

How might the bikes change?

DG: They could be heavier. We need to look into that but there is the possibility that we need to increase silencer length just to comply by the rules. It is another 2 db down and that is some horsepower on the dyno, for sure. It will be hard to reach.

How do you feel about MX2 and the age limit of 23?

DG: We have been lucky to have riders like Musquin, Roczen and Herlings in a row. It is hard to see where the class will go. MX1 is getting stronger and stronger and some people will struggle there. I don't know if the age limit is a good thing if you cannot fill the gate every week. It might be better to raise it a little bit.

With so much success in MX2 and the focus of it becoming more on a junior class will the category still be priority for KTM?

I think MX2 will always be a priority for KTM. We have always liked the small capacity engines with the two-strokes and the 125s and now the four-strokes. We have been class leader with both types of technology. We have a reputation as a horsepower factory and we will try to keep up with that.





TEAM OWNER, MONSTER ENERGY YAMAHA

Dixon oversees the main force of the factory MX2 Yamaha effort and with Cosworth components (an association since 2009) as part of the YZ250F build the British team have an extremely competitive package - they took two of the three places on the final MX2 podium of the year – despite being one of the few squads to run carburetted bikes as Yamaha have yet to introduce fuel injection onto their production machines.

How do you feel about the new decibel limit and what it will mean?

We are already pretty much there with the noise already in terms of next year's rules so we are pretty confident. We already have some systems with the airbox that we have worked on just in case. I think other brands and teams will need to look at the bike as a whole and how the air is routed and the way the engine noise is emitted from the bike. With fuel injection it should only make the bike a bit quieter and the noise smoother.

You don't run fuel injection on your bikes. What's your opinion of FI and electronics?

If you just chuck fuel injection on an engine in the place of a carb then you can enjoy some controllability but you lose the advantage of the carburettor's power increase and the way it helps the top end. When Yamaha bring the fuel injection onto the production YZ250F then it will be with a proper system so the whole intake capability will change to really boost the advantage of FI. That's why there is no injection now on the 250; unless you make a whole concept change on the cylinder head then the pros and cons balance out and don't add anything to the package. When Yamaha come along with the new FI it is going to be good. Like the 450, whether the engine is reversed or not, the concept will be based on how a proper race engine should be and the proper intake system to really enhance fuel injection. When they build a bike they do it for the masses and racing is just the sharp end. There are people around the world spending thousands of hours tuning and using this machinery in the most extreme of conditions. Yamaha has a huge name in reliability and I don't think they

would rush something just to be at the height of fashion without some kind of mechanical advantage. As we have seen with the carburettor there is no disadvantage. FI was brought in to deal with fuel emissions and measurement to ensure no overburn and here at the races – while we are going greener – it is not at the critical point.

How will the move to fuel injection affect the relationship with Cosworth that so far seems to be very beneficial and is something unique in the paddock in terms of a major third party contributing to engine construction...

Cosworth cannot wait to get fuel injection and it is a field they have been working in for the last fifteen to twenty years. They own Pi Research, which is a very high-end company for electronics in Superbike and MotoGP. Everything revolves around data and technology for them. We have already started some fuel injection work ourselves with Cosworth but they will be the first to admit that until there is an engine change to take full advantage of the technology it is really only going to be a trivial adjustments. They are looking forward to it and have a lot of experience. At the moment most units work on a low pressure system and there are only a few manufacturers that make injector units. A lot of this technology is still a step into the unknown for the average rider and racer. While fuel injection is a good thing it also takes the bike a bit further away from the hobbyist mechanic-rider. In the environment of motocross, durability is one of the main factors. For 90% of the time a carburettor is fine for a punter threading his way through the woods.





JENS JOHANSSON

TECHNICAL CO-ORDINATOR, ROCKSTAR ENERGY SUZUKI EUROPE

The Swede has been looking after the evolution of Suzuki's MX2 project for half a decade often with factory support and has evolved one of the first MX2 Grand Prix motorcycles to use fuel injection.

Do you think the new noise limits represent one of the biggest technical steps yet for the class?

JJ: I think so. I can only speak for Suzuki and our bikes but I don't think it is possible to have the same performance as now and be within the new regulations. Another aspect is that the weight will go up. I estimate that the exhaust system and silencer might need another 3-400 grams more weight. I'm not sure about this direction because many riders will already be used to the feeling of MX2 or Lites bikes and there are some big jumps and rhythm sections on the tracks these days. It might need a longer transition phase. It is my personal opinion, and it is possible that some other manufacturers have an easier or better solution but I think performance will be slightly down.

Isn't that more challenging for you to have this 'reset' and new goal for development? To get that performance back up?

JJ: We were already planning and we started to make some small adjustments and try things that are independent of the exhaust during mid-season but it is clear that the exhaust manufacturers will play a big part in this. We will probably have to continually chip away and play with engine mapping and possibly change the character of the way we run the 250 engines, like having to drop the revs for example, to make the limit. It is too early to say but it will be a lot of work and the bikes will be different. They will sound different and in my opinion be set up in an alternative way.

Is it getting difficult to make the 250s any faster without hiking up costs?

JJ: With these bikes the steps are very small, as well as the possibilities of what you can do from a stock bike to a GP bike. Ironically the cheapest way to do motorsport is to have liberal rules. If the capacity, weight and maybe revs were fixed then this would be cheap but the more complex the rule books become the more expensive it gets as development cycles always spiral. Simple rules that are easy to police and stability for the rule book with say no changes for a five year phase would make cheaper racing.

If we change every two or three years then it will cost a lot and this latest switch for 2013 will also cost. The complication of the rules – don't forget – also widen the gap between factory teams and privateers and motocross is a sport where the privateer can do pretty well and get close to the top, easily top ten. I think you can already see this in the MX2 class.

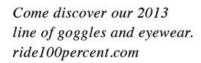
But the noise levels are something that needs to be controlled for the good of the sport and the future...

JJ: Yes, and if you want to push through a new noise regulation then it has to come from the manufacturers, those of the bikes and the exhausts. World Motocross is probably the only place where the governing body is strong enough to police these regulations. We have to be the first line in the demonstration of these changes but the cause of these restrictions are due to environmental reasons and these are not of huge priority at a high level annual Grand Prix event that visits a country once a year. We have a jet fighter flying over Uddevalla every year!

The real problem is at the practice tracks. If the technical work has to be done in this series and with the companies and partners present here that's OK but then it is up to the governing body – the FIM – and the national federations to make sure that these new regulations can be applied to test tracks or publics tracks or national series where you can have four to five hundred riders competing over a weekend. The noise needs to be lowered in these places.

A motocross grand prix is like F1 or MotoGP, they are one-off events. The environmental problem is not here at a weekend but during the week. Everybody is looking at – and hearing – the paddock but the FIM know that the GPs is the only place where they are strong enough to push such a regulation through so then we have to be the first to do it. It will be possible at this level because there are many professional teams and the manufacturers are involved. The next most important step for the sport will be to do something radical at national and regional level.















Gautier Paulin, 2012 MXoN. Lommel, Belgium.



MX NEWS

LEAVE AN EMAIL...GRAB SOME BAGGETT GOGGLES

Our friends at **Scott Sports** were extra organised over the weekend of the 66th Motocross of Nations and ensured that one of their leading athletes, Blake Baggett, put aside five minutes to sign some exclusive units of their replica Team USA goggles. Scott have kindly presented us with one of the very few pairs to carry the AMA 250 MX Champion's scribble to give away. The goggle itself is one of the company's innovative Tyrant line that features the patented Fit system (adjustable shape to contour every face), 3.2 face foam and Works anti-fog lens.

To get your hands on the eyewear that Baggett is holding in the photograph simply be one of the expanding group that subscribes to OTOR by leaving your email address on the website. By joining the subs list you will receive just **ONE** email every two weeks notifying you when a new edition of OTOR is online. On Monday October 22nd we'll send an email to the lucky winner and publish their name on our Facebook page. To subscribe to OTOR and be in with a chance of some new Scott goggles worth 75 euros click **here**



QATAR A 'GO'

As revealed in the previous issue of OTOR the opening Grand Prix of the 2013 FIM Motocross World Championship will be taking place under the lights of the road race circuit of Losail for the very first Qatari round of the series.

Youthstream confirmed via a press release last week that the 'first Saturday of March' will entertain the opening fixture of a long-term agreement to visit the location and also further progress the FIM's development programme in other areas of the world. It will mean that the motocross GP schedule will begin a full month earlier than usual. The Qatari Grand Prix will be followed by a trip to Thailand for a truly exotic first phase to the new campaign compared to the normally chilly dates in northern Europe.

It is fair to say that a great deal of scepticism will greet the decision to start the season in the desert, much in the same way MotoGP elected to install Losail as 'GP1' six years ago. For the teams the cost factor will weigh heavily in the midst of their immediate planning (with a South American double of Mexico and Brazil also to consider) and the early push to March is more inconvenience than trouble with most crews already with race mileage under their belts by that stage. There are still a few holes in the calendar but some of the next noises from Youthstream has to be concerning a support programme for teams to ensure a healthy turnout for these two inaugural and exciting but tricky first events. With a meeting scheduled between the manufacturers, teams and powers-that-be in Switzerland this month some further news that could change the way the FIM World Championship looks and operates could soon be forthcoming.



E-MX GETS CLOSER WITH ZOLDER CIRCUIT HELP

On the eve of the Motocross of Nations the FIM and the Zolder circuit – located only a 30 minute drive away from Lommel – launched a bold project that could be a major influence in the development of electric bikes and how they could possibly shape motocross in years to come.

Momentum behind e-MX is coming strong and fast thanks to the vast importance rightly given to green issues. It is a topic that the FIM have embraced fully and progressed since their notion of planting a series of trees only four years ago. For Zolder, a short and compact permanent racing facility that is no stranger to motocross after hosting two Grands Prix and the 2003 Nations, the environmental credibility involved in the facilitation of this new, clean and quiet form of motorsport is a major political badge. The Belgian's have actually been running a showcase 'Clean Week' since 2009.

The long-and-short of the presentation involved e-MX adopting a BMX/Supercross racing format with a series of five-lap elimination heats to the finals, sub-one minute lap-times, a track guaranteeing a minimum of 80% viewing possibilities for spectators and the chance for racers to swap bikes or batteries between sprints. The crucial elements of the whole show would fit into a TV friendly one-hour production.

After the demo/try-out at Zolder former Grand Prix winner Marnicq Bervoets said: "It takes some adapting but I think it has got potential when the industry and the politics back it up. TV potential and no sound nuisance for the neighbourhood? Is that important? Yes, I think that will be at our advantage with kids and when they want to ride Motocross. When there is no sound, in general, it will be easier for us and also easier to find circuits. A start has been made now. With the backing of the FIM and everybody else, I think there will be a breakthrough in the next few years. I hope the industry gives its support too and then things will go rather quickly."

The first push towards electric motocross has been engaged and the FIM are steering the ship in the same way they are proactive with road racing. The next move is to gain the interest of the manufacturers (KTM were lamentable absentees at Zolder) for e-MX to become a reality and a viable series.

The last word goes to Thierry Deflandre, CEO of Zolder: "We have proposed an innovative format that will facilitate the access to e-MX for the industry. Moreover, circuits like ours located in urban areas need to develop new racing concepts limiting sound nuisance for the local inhabitants".



TON DOWN

GUARD CHANGING...

By Adam Wheeler

The immediate post-race aftermath at the Motocross of Nations featured some curious reactions from onlookers at Lommel.

The Belgian team of Desalle De Dycker and Van Horebeek wore the expression of seasoned-podium finishers with a sense of relief at not having dropped the ball at their home event, but also a little disappointed not to have done better.

Team USA – Baggett, Barcia and Dungey – struggled to muster any signs at having enjoyed the ordeal but were magnanimous in defeat. To a man they were also quick to remind those in the press conference that this was very much a race in a 'backyard' environment for Europeans.

The victors, Germany (Nagl, Roczen, Schiffer), simply didn't give a toss at what was going on around them. From Ken Roczen's standing backflip, the podium rush by the fans and the shouts of victory during the post-race media centre debrief, this was an achievement that had nothing to do with the idiosyncrasies of the terrain or favouritism towards any type of rider. It was about unabated joy and a milestone triumph. I picked up on plenty of non-German gloating afterwards. There was a sensation that many were content to see Team USA beaten rather than another nation earn the Chamberlain trophy. After seven consecutive wins and their annual position as the star attraction the Americans' scalp was only getting bigger and more inviting each edition of the race. Lommel was always going to be a tough one for them. The sapping Benelux character of the sand and the fact that many of their European rivals were well versed with the surface meant that this was the occasion where their underbelly was most exposed.

Team USA was beaten into third place and at one stage might not have even made the podium but rather than Lommel representing the slaying of the dragon this was merely a smack between the eyes. A wake-up call and a 'refresh' for a country that are still able to put together the best, fastest and most talented trio every year the Nations comes around while the majority of countries have their ambitions wrecked by an injury to a star participant or anxiously try to find an effective rider for the under-23 MX2 slot.

The Americans are always favourites for Nations glory and some might say that they have also ridden their luck in one of two of those previous seven-in-a-row but it would be a tremendous folly to assume they will be not be the most determined team in the gate come Teutschenthal, even with the current champions on home turf. Lommel has 'awoken the beast' and one can only hope for another sandy venue somewhere in the next decade to prevent another American train of success.

Of course by dedicating the majority of this blog to the dethronement of the U.S. I could be denouncing Germany's accomplishment but my intention is nothing of the sort. Anyone who has watched Nagl, Roczen and Schiffer over the years will know all three are superb sand riders and the simple fact is that Germany pushed themselves to the head of the queue for a new European victory as Belgium and France were also waiting in the wings. After Thunder Valley in 2010 (where they made the podium for the first time) and with the Americans becoming a bigger prize turkey with every passing season Germany's glory was timely and deserved...even if it might be short-lived.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR CHRISTOPHE POURCEL...?

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer



One of the most startling talents in the FIM Motocross World Championship is on the verge of putting his boots in the locker at just 24 years of age. The enigmatic Christophe Pourcel has tasted blood, sweat and champagne on two continents and still remains the most successful European rider of his generation when it comes to the AMA arenas and national motocross tracks. After a first term in MX1 with an initial stab at running his own CP377 Monster Energy Kawasaki Pro Circuit

backed team Pourcel produced sublime moments such as his last lap battles with foe Gautier Paulin in Italy and unforgettable skill in the Brazilian mud. For a rider that claimed two Grand Prix wins, was one of the very few to hug Tony Cairoli's rear wheel and picked up eight podiums on his way to fourth in the series Pourcel will not continue with his CP377 racing set-up and looks set to leave European shores and maybe even the sport altogether. Here is what he had to say...



FEATURE

With Chad Reed in the U.S. and now you trying a different project do you think a rider can make his own team in the sport these days or is it too difficult? It is definitely difficult. It becomes so you can't completely 100% focus on racing and training. There is a

lot on the business and financial side to be taken care of, but it is possible if you manage your time correctly.

Do you think it is possible for an MX/SX racer to make himself into a 'brand' or is the sport too small? Would it be easier in the U.S.?

The sport is definitely small, but the fans stick behind you. Most of our CP377 (LINK HERE) were in France, and that is where the majority of my fans are. I am not sure how the brand would have done if I was racing in the US, and have been shipping out of there. I think making a brand and product would have been easier in the US because it is a little expensive to do this type of thing in Europe, but since most of our sales were in Europe it was better to be here.

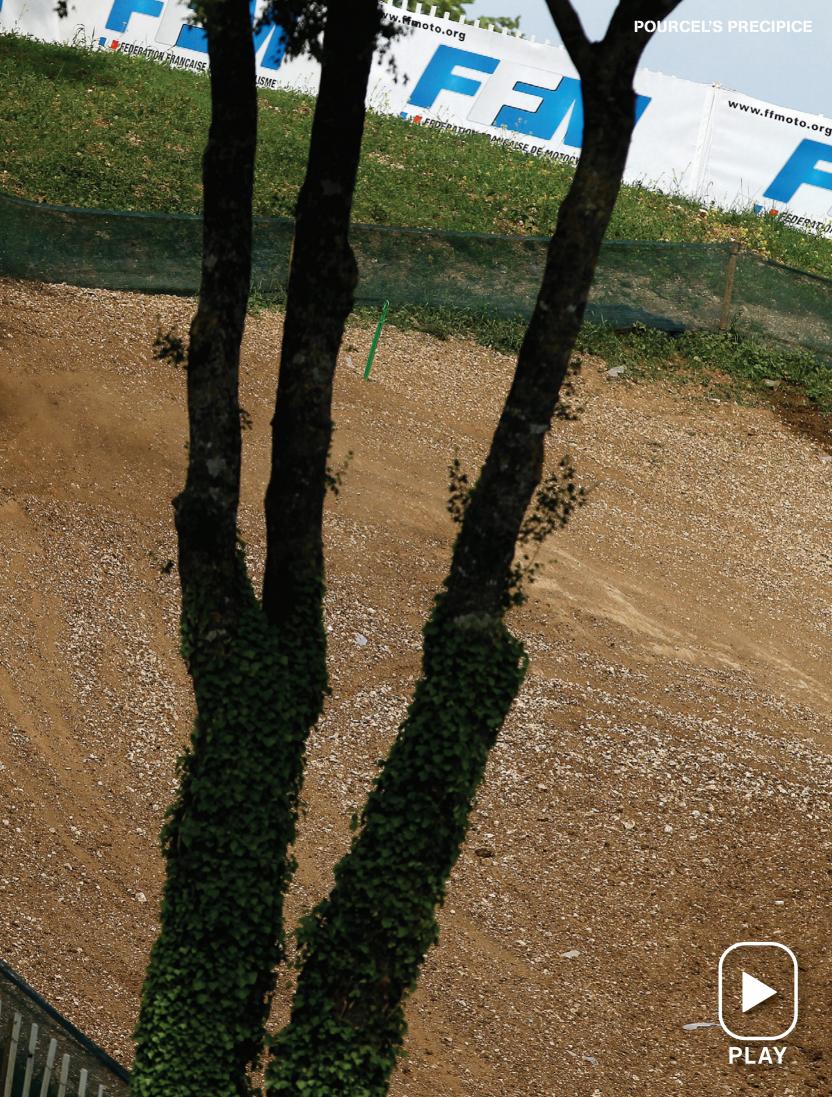
2012 started strongly for you and then had some upand-down moments. What's your feeling on your first year back in Europe?

Really 2012 did not start that strong for me as I took like no points in Valkenswaard, the sand is a tricky thing and we did not have the right settings! But otherwise yes, I was doing pretty well after that. Once we hit Latvia and Russia, I did not like the tracks at all and the traveling was not easy. In some countries it is so difficult to get around, and they are possibly not fit to have a GP. The Czech race was good for me, and then in England I broke my shoulder blade in the qualification race so it was up and down from there. I like to be back in Europe, it is home for me so it is good to be around my family and friends and be able to train in France. I wanted to make a run at the MX1 championship, and also have the experience of racing back in Europe again. Overall, I was disappointed with the championship. The weekends were just too long. Saturdays just seem like a waste to me, especially the qualification race. You can have the fastest lap in timed practice and then lose it with a bad start or a crash in the qualification race. Then you have a crappy gate pick for both motos on Sunday! This is one thing I prefer about AMA motocross; race day is quick and gate picks are done by lap time. The tracks also tend to be better over in the US.











There were some talk and rumours about physical problems (apart from the injury at Matterley Basin)...was this the case?

I didn't hear any of that talk, and there was nothing else physically wrong with me that I knew of! I did break my shoulder blade in the qualification race in England. It was so painful to ride with and it took a week or so to figure out what was exactly wrong and then about three weeks to heal fully. I pushed through the pain in England and the week off between then and Lierop was not enough for me to heal. I had planned to make a push at the end of the championship, but I wasn't able to finish the motos in Lierop and that set me back even further in points. To ride with a broken shoulder blade was pretty much the worst condition for racing; I could barely hang on!

In a press conference at a GP this year you mentioned that the riders could use a 'group' or 'association' to recommend ideas. Why do you think this does not exist?

A riders' association is a really good idea (GP's or US), because there needs to be a voice for us. It seems we only get to express our opinions in the press conferences, after the things we disliked about the race have already happened. Even if something is said during the press conference, there is no one to follow up with an action. I think the track conditions were bad enough in Mexico that a large portion of the riders, including myself, were not going to put up with it and made a stand. I am not exactly sure why one does not exist, but I have a feeling it is because of conflicts that could arise between riders, Youthstream, promoters and the tracks. It is important and should be something that should happen soon. I also think there should be a group for the teams and managers. One of the reasons why I am not returning to race GP's is because it is too expensive, and with the extended calendar

for 2013 (Mexico, Brazil, Qatar, Russia, Thai-

The shipping, logistics, communication, and

costs of attending these races are not some-

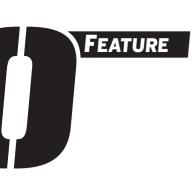
land) and beyond it is becoming even more so.

thing I am interested in paying for. I was happy to have JJ [Jean Jacques Luisetti Floride CLS Team Owner] there to help us, he has done a lot for me and I am thankful for that. The trip to Mexico and Brazil this year was so last minute (like being able to ship fuel), then the hotel in Russia was an hour and a half away from the track and the airport was an eighthour drive. Everyone should be involved to decide what is reasonable for all: the tracks, the teams, the riders, and the governing body of the series.

There was some gossip at one stage that you'd be a rider for Jeff Ward. You also talked about racing again in the U.S. in 2013. Around the GP of Czech Republic you were also speaking about another year in Europe. Was it difficult to find a solid direction...? One you were happy with?

Yeah, and it still is difficult to find a solid direction but racing the GPs is off the agenda. Starting my own team was part of finding that right direction because it was a set-up that I was comfortable with, it was mine. Anything we didn't like was taken care of. Since my accident, racing for me is not about finding any team or a quantity of dollars just to get out there. It is about me being happy while racing. Finding the right people in the right team with the right equipment is very important, and not easy to do. I think people know now that I have turned down a few 'big offers' over the years, and now I wrongly have a 'high price' reputation with the fans...like money is all I care about.

I do not think, or expect, people to ever understand everything about deals that I make or break and not many people have walked a mile in shoes like mine. Being able to come back from my injury in 2007, and then actually coming back to racing is a huge accomplishment in itself. Then having success in the sport is even greater, but it was all never 'easy'. Everybody has a price tag or circumstances that need to be met to make a deal happen...and I alone decide what that is for me.



Do you think running your own team made people think 'Christophe Pourcel wants to be a free spirit'? Could this effect how brands and teams might look at you for the future?

I don't really focus on how it makes me look for brands and teams. When the economy got bad, teams were just expecting riders to take whatever deal they could. I wasn't willing to do that. We are doing the same job as before and there is still a lot of risk in what we do. When the guys ride for free or take low contracts, it brings down the average price for every other rider. I understand there is less money to be had but there still has to be the respect for what we do. As far as being a 'free spirit', I knew what needed to be in place for me to return to racing and that is what I created with my team. I couldn't find the right fit anywhere else. Overall there were ups and downs with having my own thing, but it was a good experience.

Having won championships and races on different bikes and in different series and made sacrifices to do so, how big is the desire to continue with little reward?

I think anyone in my position would have very little desire to continue with little reward. Why go backwards? Why should I have to go back and ride for nothing to prove myself? Who am I proving myself to? I have won a world championship, was 2nd in 2007 (before my accident), won 2 AMA SX Lites titles (2009/2010), two podium finishes in AMA motocross series after mechanical failures and injury (2009/2010), and have since won GPs and hung with the 6 times world champion... seems enough to me. If teams choose to have a top ten guy on their team versus a title contender, then that is their preference.

At 24 years of age and with your CV of achievements why are you in a position where you are analysing your next career move?

With all of the difficulty throughout this year and then trying to put something together for 2013, I stopped enjoying racing. I wasn't happy and I wasn't having fun. Racing motocross is my passion. That passion was the drive I had to return after my accident. I definitely still have goals that I would like to achieve in motocross but right now there is no opportunity for me to achieve those goals. I know what support I need to be able to go out and have success and make the risks worth it. After the Bercy Supercross I will be returning to the US, I still have my house there in Florida and I like it there. We will be looking into alternate business opportunities since I have made good money with my success in racing. I am interested in doing something normal!

What about Bercy? Do you have the motivation to prove you are as good at Supercross as you always were? Could success at Bercy help with an AMA SX ride in January? Would you be interested in that?

I do not look at Bercy as a race to go and prove myself worthy of a SX ride in 2013, but I do want to do good there. I am taking the training for it seriously and am excited to race there. It is in my home country and the fans in Paris are crazy!

AMA-MX NEWS

BLUE OUTLOOK FOR '13

t seems that Yamaha is indeed coming out with an all-new 2014 YZ450F but it will still have the backwards motor design of the current generation. The often-discussed YZ450F is controversial for the riders and teams over here and there's no doubt that privateer racers are shying away from blue the last few years. The one thing that nobody who rides or races it - and I've talked to a ton of guys - disputes is the motor. The engine itself is strong and the throttle response is incredible. The design of putting the motor backwards isn't the issue, it's the stuff around the motor that is the hitch. The bike is big, wide and heavy and that needs to be addressed. They say the handling is the biggest problem as the frame flex in the front is high while the rear section is very stiff. This can lead to a front end that wanders, is hard to place into a turn and is unpredictable.

A lot of racers were changing the offset of the clamps to bring the front wheel closer to the frame and that helped in a way but mostly made the bike choppier. This is where the boys in blue are concentrating their efforts for 2014 on.

The frame construction, motor mounts, head stays and things like that all look to be much different in flex characteristics in an attempt to get the bike to handle better. As well, a diet is needed and there's got to be a way to make the bike slimmer like the JGR Yamaha guys did for James Stewart before well, before he left the team because of the bike. So stay tuned and the rumors were this new-ish machine was promised to Dean Wilson for the outdoor season in 2013 in order to try and get his name on a contract with those guys but it was unsuccessful.





BTO MORPH INTO ORANGE

e've been talking about it for a while but the cat is now officially out of the bag in that the BTOSports.com team is now affiliated with KTM in a big way. The little team that was started as a way for the three Butler brothers (Forest, Karsten and Brandon) to race professionally in a truck and trailer has now, ten years later, transformed into a factory supported effort with Michael Byrne and Matt Georke for the 2013 season. The factory will be responsible for the team's motors and suspension and in conjunction with a local Florida dealer, the team will have support like never before. It's nice to see a long-time privateer crew be rewarded for their efforts and through good times and bad, the BTOSports. com squad has been there slaving away and trying to make the best of it. It's a nice effort by the KTM guys as well for the team (seri-

ously, is KTM just coming on or what?) and team manager Roger DeCoster has a hand in this deal. And Byrne himself was having a nice comeback season after injuries ruined him for the last couple of years. Unfortunately injuries struck again as he broke his leg while leading the Unadilla national. Goerke was a fill-in for Byrne on the team for supercross and performed better than he ever had before to which he credits a move to California and more practice on the hard stuff as the reason why. After that Matt went to Canada to race their nationals and simply cleaned up in the northland winning the title going away. After many years of injuries and toiling away in the pro ranks, Georke appears to have moved up to a new level. So keep an eye on the KTM's of Byrne and Georke out there next year, they and their team are looking good.

MOUR

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VEGAS BABY!

By Steve Matthes

The upcoming Monster Energy Cup promises some excitement in terms of the track and of the competitors that are expected to show up.

We'll have Ryan Villopoto in his first meet back from a serious knee injury, Ryan Dungey, who hasn't stopped practicing and training because of the MXDN, Chad Reed will have his first race since March, Justin Barcia will be on the factory Honda 450 for his debut and he'll be anxious to show that he belongs with all the big boys. We're not sure on James Stewart and whether or not he'll show up but the promoters are telling people he'll be there (they couldn't possibly be saying that to get some more ticket sales can they? No, promoters would never, ever do that) and although I'm not totally sure, I'd put the chances at 50/50 that the number seven shows up on his Suzuki.

The changes the folks at Feld have made promise to make the event better than last year, when a combination of long races, lack of depth of riders made for some long and boring main events. The mains are going to be shorter, the track's going to have a Joker lane that a racer has to take one time in the course of the main event, a split start that promises to provide some excitement and a better track design that sees the section that goes up into the stands utilized better for more passing.

So with the alterations I think the 'MEC' has potential but as usual it boils down to the racers on the track making it exciting and in this case, I think we're looking at some serious fireworks. Villopoto's got something to prove and will want to show everyone that he's still the man.



Dungey can't be happy about the beating he got last year at this race (when he had limited time on the KTM). Barcia's not the type to take any crap from anyone and he's got that big chip on his shoulder that you'll be able to see from the MGM Grand Hotel.

The changes planned for 2012 should see the Monster Cup be even better

Of all the predictions I feel safe about, the one where I think Barcia gets into it with one of the "names" of the MEC is the safest. He's just not going to be quiet out there. Reed's probably not odds on favorite to win but he's also a racer and doesn't take to the gate to just ride around. How many times will people consider the Aussie one of the old guys and not having the speed, only to see him go out and ride as good or better than ever before we put him in the conversation? Chad's got a habit of rising to the occasion and you never want to put it past him to maybe win one of the main events. And Stewart, yep- it's James Stewart- he's probably the most talented person to ever ride a bike and will be looking to come in and make his mark on the still-new Suzuki.

Add in all these factors and I'm looking forward to this Monster Energy Cup, it's shaping up to be one last big bang before the silence. Oh, and there's also the matter of a million bucks on the line...





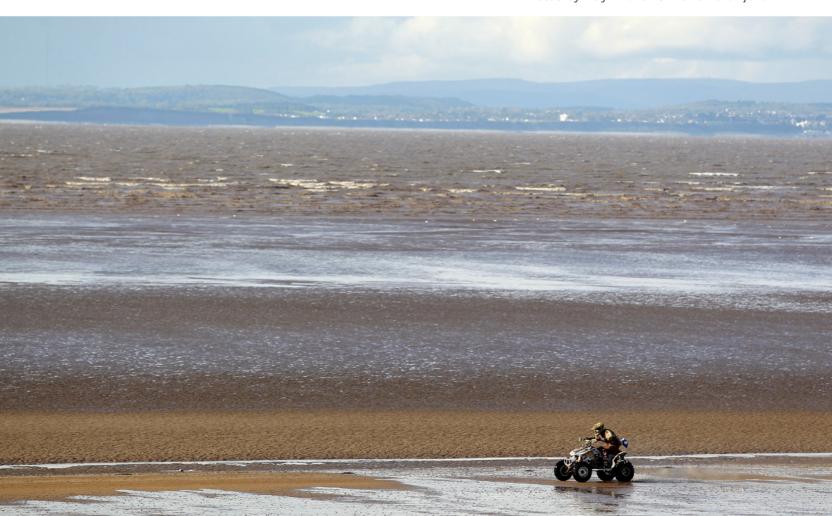
BEACH





BANZAL

Photos by Ray Archer & Nuno Laranjeira

















GoPRO

The ever-expanding American action-camera company now seems an inseparable element of the extreme sport scene thanks to a robust and very effective product.

GoPro released their second-generation unit – HD Hero 2 – last year and have now just gone live with their first **app** which carries several very useful functions. Utilising the WiFi potential of the HD Hero 2 the app allows tablets and smartphones the possibility to remotely control the camera and also engage a live screen preview to ensure you have the best view of what you want to capture.

In full the utilities are: 1) Full camera control, including Power On/Off, Recording Start/Stop, and all Mode settings, 2) Live scene-preview prior to and during video and photo capture, 3) Real time monitoring of the camera vitals including battery life and SD card capacity, 4) Sync GoPro camera date and time to your smartphone or tablet. The App will also send you GoPro's video and photo of the day selections to ensure you keep 'in' with the online community and can take inspiration from other's creations.

"Being able to use your smart device to remotely turn on and control your GoPro, seeing what your camera sees, opens up all sorts of interesting new use cases. We're excited to see the inventive ideas our customers come up with," says Nicholas Woodman, GoPro founder and CEO. The App is free and is available now from the Apple store.

Click here to get it.









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PRODUCTS





ARAI

One of the leading helmet brands in the world and a popular choice for racers (what better seal of approval could you ask for?) Arai were showing off their 2013 collection at Intermot in Cologne and one of the new models that caught our eye was the **Rebel**.

This helmet has been created with a view towards the growing trend of street-bike riders with an upright and flexible riding position. An example of the design-thought can be seen in the chinbar 'spoiler' that kicks more air around the neck and improves the aerodynamic potential of the lid. Based on the popular Quantum, this helmet is orientated for those with little protection from wind or the elements and it comes with all of Arai's trademark quality stamps, such as the FCS (Facial Contour System) that means it is an easier and more comfortable fit thanks to the padding's material and position.

The Rebel comes in three colours (white, black and frost black) or three paint schemes, two of which can be seen on these pages.





ODFU

Just walking around the halls of any of the exhibitions like Intermot or EICMA will let you appreciate just how many companies are involved in the motorcycle industry but amidst all the competition for apparel and accessories the products that are well-made, well-designed and are slightly different tend to standout.

ODFU stands for 'One down five up' and is a quirky new British clothing brand from Kevin Wilson. A simple look at the website will tell you all you need to know and there is a strong chance that one of his t-shirts as featured here are bound to appeal:

"I have a strong belief in fusing creativity with originality. Every hand drawn ODFU design and individually packaged product is guaranteed to be slightly different from the next," says Wilson. "To stand out from the mainstream, ODFU focuses on producing limited edition products with authentic hand-made packaging. And to make our customers' orders even more personal, we are hand scripting the first 50 orders with their initials."

Don't miss out.























TRIUMPH

One of our last bike tests planned for 2012 will see Roland Brown taking the new Triumph Street Triple for a blast.

As seen in the last issue of OTOR the 2013 version of this popular and striking motorcycle is virtually a new model from the ground-up with Project Manager Simon Warburton claiming the machine is the culmination of three years of work at the bike's official launch at Intermot two weeks ago.

What to look out for? A weight-save of six kilos, a new chassis that focuses on a more precise rider feeling and agility, more centralisation due to a new silencer position and revised geometry and a host of other items such as switchable ABS and some new styling...aptly demonstrated by the R model here







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